

Environmental Collective Action - October 2022

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This summary is prepared for the 2022 three-month trial of the Forward Project of the Social Change Lab - Susilo Wibisono & Winnifred R. Louis – details of the methodology and all summaries available here: <http://www.socialchangelab.net/forward.html> and via subscription/email at <https://socialchangelab.substack.com/> . Feedback welcome, to w.louis@psy.uq.edu.au .

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Month/Year	October 2022
Key term	“environmental collective action” and environmental collective action
Database	Google Scholar
Link to database	https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17p2fFHcyHQ0-hhlzNb2ZV-nzAUPxBPYs1fXsVC1IRY/edit?usp=sharing

For the keyword ‘environmental collective action’ in the month of October 2022, there were a total of 134 published items that were found on Google Scholar. The majority of publications were book chapters and journal articles, but some other documents were also found including theses, book reviews, research reports, proceedings, and forums. Of the relevant journal articles published, 24 were empirical and four were theoretical papers. The methodologies used were quantitative surveys and experiments, literature reviews, interviews, qualitative studies, and case studies. Correlation and multiple regression were the most common statistical analyses used, followed by multinomial logistic regression and code extraction from interviews.

Participants

Majority of relevant publications were available free of charge online. Among the studies that could be coded, participant numbers ranged from 41 to 2076 and were mainly quantitative studies or literature reviews. Generalisability for findings was strong, with data from countries such as Germany, Thailand, Japan, Egypt, and the USA analysed. In addition, the studies consisted of multiple different age groups and education levels.

Findings

There were several main areas that publications seemed to focus on the most that fall under the category of ‘environmental collective action’. The most common issues were

decision-making and behaviour (Case & Connor, 2022), groups and communities (Esnard, 2023; Howe, 2022), and politics and governance (Christion, 2022; Dunlap, 2023; Espelage et al., 2022).

Several publications made clear that after decades of governmental failure to halt climate change, people and community members are motivated to act. Multiple studies found that the most likely predictor for environmentally friendly behaviour adoption was self-efficacy, though predictors differ between behaviour adoption and rejection, and intention and implementation (Case & Connor, 2022; LeVasseur, 2022). Having a higher environmental identity and greater experience of climate disaster is also related to increased intentions to engage in pro-environmental behaviours. It is suggested that creating a shared understanding of systemic disaster risk is associated with the choices citizens make to respond to or prevent these disasters (Agustianingsih et al., 2022; Buchtman et al., 2022). To increase shared understanding and local knowledge, social movements are necessary (Benyei et al., 2022; Xin, 2022). Environmental collective action not only highlights important environmental issues such as air and water quality, but also strengthens individuals' motives for collective action, commitment, collaboration, and community (Benyei et al., 2022; Fajrina et al., 2023; Gumbert, 2022).

Another major theme of the October 2022 research on environmental collective action is that different communities and social groups are more or less likely to support changing policies regarding environmental protection, and experience different levels of social pressure to support environmental causes. Findings indicate that a strong predictor of waste sorting and consumption of recycled products are influenced heavily by social conditions, whether this is infrastructure or systems, and social networks and community support (Slayton & Ludwig, 2022). Findings also suggest that when a sense of pride and community investment is created around environmental action may significantly reduce waste production, even in high consuming contexts like Japan (Benyei et al., 2022). The way citizens think about and act towards their local environment is also reported to be significantly affected by cultural background (Benyei et al., 2022). Indigenous and local knowledge, a cumulative body of knowledge informing one of practices, knowledge, and worldviews, informs people about relationships between living-beings and their surrounding environment (Benyei et al., 2022; Vivi et al., 2022). Threats to community-based natural resource management, which assists local knowledge, include external development projects and extractive activities (Diver et al., 2022). Environmental collective action may also be influenced by political representations of nature change (Manulak, 2022).

In summation, the October 2022 studies highlight that environmental issues must be increasingly acknowledged in a world where environmental concerns are becoming increasingly prevalent. Both theoretical and empirical publications suggest that different social groups address the challenge of environmental problems in different ways, and that collective action and pro-environmental behaviour is influenced by different life experiences. Collective action and politics are also heavily intertwined, as many environmental issues are politically relevant and contested.

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